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A guide for working with the older blind



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# ***A GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH THE OLDER BLIND PERSON***

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## INTRODUCTION

Blind people are no different from sighted people, except in the limitation of their vision. Beyond that, they may have very little in common. They are all unique individuals, whose personal needs and responses cannot be categorically defined any more than those of any other group of people, with or without disabilities.

What one blind person needs or seeks in the way of support or assistance may be entirely different from that of another person with a similar disability. One fact, however, is certain. No one can enjoy or profit from constant idleness. And blind or not, no one need do so.

There is virtually no limit to the types of activities in which a blind person can engage. Some will require assistance, at first, in even simple tasks. In more complex ones, they may need supervised practice. But given the time and direction, most blind persons can develop independence in mobility and self-care.

Do not encourage inactivity by constantly insisting on doing things for them, for overprotection inevitably increases dependence. The more things a blind person does for himself, the more he will expect from himself, and respect himself.

This guide is to serve as a reference for the nurse, the social worker, the family member, the activity director, the volunteer -- anyone who needs additional information for working with the older blind person. It is not an end in itself, but rather a resource only, which would need to be supplemented by other books and pamphlets.

## DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS

The legal definition of blindness is: Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with corrected lenses; or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if the peripheral field is restricted to a diameter of 20 degrees or less.

This means that a person is legally blind if he can identify only at 20 feet or less what a person with normal vision can identify at 200 feet, or if his field of vision is so restricted that he can see only a very small area at one time.

Legal blindness then does not necessarily mean total sightlessness. In fact, over 90% of the legally blind have some residual vision, and this remaining vision should be exploited to its greatest possible potential.

## BASIC GUIDELINES

1. Many "blind" persons are not totally blind. Vision may be on a continuum ranging from less than normal vision to total blindness. Also, an individual's vision may vary under differing circumstances and with different tasks, as vision depends upon the eye condition, the amount of lighting present, the distance of the object from the viewer, and the amount of visual discrimination needed.
2. Blind persons do not possess a sixth sense to compensate for their loss of vision. Also, their remaining senses are no better than those of sighted individuals. The visually handicapped simply learn to better utilize their remaining senses since they have little or no vision on which to rely.
3. Alert a blind person to your presence or absence when entering or leaving a room or area in which he is.  
  
Do not tiptoe around or stare at or spy on a blind person without his knowledge. One would not do this with a sighted friend.
4. When you meet a blind person who may not recognize your voice, mention your name.  
  
Speak directly to a blind person and do not raise your voice.  
  
When talking with more than one person, address the blind individual by using his name.

5. In conversation, do not hesitate to use words like "see" and "look." They are a normal part of the English language and should not be avoided.
6. Identify currency as it is given to a blind person.
7. When delivering and/or reading mail to a blind person, mention the return address. Read mail to a visually handicapped person in a matter-of-fact manner. Do not discuss it or ask prying questions. Remember mail is confidential.
8. When providing a blind person with treatment, such as taking his temperature, removing a bandage, etc., explain the procedure first so the individual will not be startled.
9. If a blind person appears to need help, identify yourself and offer your services, saying, "May I help you?" Be sure the blind individual knows you are speaking to him. Do not assume you know his needs. If he does need help, he will gladly accept your assistance. If he refuses your offer of assistance, accept his decision.
10. Be natural with a visually handicapped person. Treat him as you would anyone else. Remember that he is an individual first and blind second.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SIGHTED GUIDE

In a familiar setting, a visually handicapped person often can travel independently. But in a new or unfamiliar environment, he may need the help of a sighted person to serve as his guide. The sighted guide must have the complete trust of the visually handicapped person and is responsible for the safety of that person.

The guiding of blind individuals is a personal service which sighted persons are sometimes called upon to give. It has been noticed that most people find a certain awkwardness in the role of guide, which arises from their lack of knowledge of effective techniques of handling the situation. The following basic suggestions are to assist in relieving this uncertainty.

1. Always try to remember that a blind person cannot see. This fact is apt to escape the associates of blind persons as they gain a familiarity with the effectiveness which is possible for the blind and lose the impression that blindness means helplessness. There is no magic to the effectiveness of blind people, and it depends to a large extent upon securing from sighted people information which cannot possibly be gained without the aid of the human eye, or which could be gained by touch, but with embarrassment. Openness, directness, and unobtrusiveness should govern the imparting of such information.

2. Ask the blind person to take your arm. Show him where your elbow is by touching his arm with it. Never take his arm and propel him by the elbow. The blind person is at his poorest when you try to get him to precede you. Never seize him by the upper arm from behind and shove him around or forward.

3. Ordinarily walk a half a pace ahead of the blind person. In going up or down steps, or into dangerous places, keep one pace ahead of him. After some practice with you, he will be able to know he has reached steps by the movement of your arm and your body. He will also be able to determine turns by the movement of your body.
4. Always tell a blind person whom you have not guided before when you come to steps. And, if coming to a small irregularity in the terrain over which he might stumble, tell him about this also.
5. Be careful at all times not to let his opposite side bump into door frames and obstructions. This will require extreme watchfulness.
6. If it is necessary for the blind person to make some slight movement to the left or right to get out of the way or maneuver into positions, direct him to do so orally. Again, do not shove him.
7. The expressions "over here," "over there," "down there," and "right here" should be used sparingly. Be specific and precise when assisting a blind person locate an object or when giving directions.
8. In giving directions, or in any other conversation with a blind individual, speak no more loudly than necessary, speak distinctly, and direct your words to the blind person alone.
9. The good guide is inconspicuous. He does not take over and run things. When someone speaks to a blind person through his guide, the guide may direct the conversation of that someone to the blind person. This will usually be sufficient.

10. At all times, picture carefully what move the blind person is about to make so that exact directions may be given. Be helpful by looking ahead and anticipating. Especially avoid mixing right and left, particularly when you face the blind person and his right becomes your left.

11. Give an honest play-by-play account of what you are seeing, as desired or required.

12. When you guide a blind person into a place of public assembly, be sure he understands his location, especially if you leave for any amount of time. It is better under such circumstances to establish a point of contact, such as a counter, chair, table, or wall. Where there is confusion in a public place, a blind person needs more help than in familiar surroundings. Many of the little things he does for himself with ease in his own environment will be difficult in a different environment. Give him the help he needs in such a case.

13. In guiding a blind person to a chair, bring him to a point, usually the back of the chair, at which he touches it and knows which direction it faces. It will then be a simple matter for him to examine it with his hands, pull it out from a table for himself if this is necessary, and be seated.

14. In entering an automobile, a blind person can engineer his own actions if he is told in which direction the vehicle is facing. Place one hand on the door handle and the other on top of the car. This situation should then be familiar enough for the blind person to manage on his own. If he becomes confused, further information can be given.

15. If you find that you cannot cope with your own feeling toward blindness, and are regularly called upon to guide blind individuals, try to get in touch with some well-seasoned blind person and then talk with him or her about your feelings. Such people are glad to share with you the attitudes which have made it possible for them to face the hard realities of the situation. They will be glad to assist you in being a friend to blind persons.

## ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

ORIENTATION and MOBILITY involves the art and science of presenting to the blind or visually handicapped individual instruction and experience in those aids, methods, services, and skills which will enable the individual to move about his environment with confidence, safety, and purpose.

### ORIENTATION:

The teaching of an awareness of relevant factors in an individual's environment and of the use of the remaining senses, such as auditory, tactual, olfactory, kinesthetic, and temperature, to determine one's position in this environment and to use these factors for safe and purposeful travel.

### MOBILITY:

The teaching of the use and purpose of the long cane and its techniques and consequently the obtaining of skills necessary and proficient to travel safely with the cane from one known point in one's environment to another point.

## A. Sighted Guide

### 1. Grip

#### (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Hold arm relaxed and steady; no swinging of arm and preferably not bent.

#### (b) Blind Person

- (1) Hold arm, hand (as in small children), or above elbow firmly.
- (2) Fingers inside; thumb on outside. Forearm bent approximately 90 degrees to upper arm.

### 2. Position or Body Relationship

#### (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Maintain normal pace.

#### (b) Blind Person

- (1) Maintain a half-pace distance behind guide.
- (2) Maintain also a half-step distance to the right if on the guide's right or to the left if on the guide's left, keeping the guide's arm positioned down the center of the blind person's body.
- (3) The sighted guide and blind person present  $1\frac{1}{2}$  body width's when walking in normal position and conditions.

### 3. Seating

#### (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Place blind person's hand on the back or arm of chair, indicating he should sit down. Also, one can approach a couch from the front or a chair or sofa from the side.

#### (b) Blind Person

- (1) Determine by touch the position of the seat of the chair.
- (2) Sweep the seat of the chair with the free hand.
- (3) Sit down.

### 4. Open Space

#### (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Never leave a blind person standing in an open space alone.
- (2) For orientation, security, and safety, give the blind person a chair to hold onto or leave them by a wall, always indicating this chair or wall, or other object if such is the case.

#### (b) Blind Person

- (1) When walking in areas where there is a lot of room, the blind person may walk alongside of the sighted guide, but it is preferable that he still remain behind.

## 5. Narrow Openings and Congested Areas

## (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Give cue by placing arm behind and across back.

## (b) Blind Person

- (1) Respond to cue by moving back until crook in arm is straight--approximately one full pace.
- (2) Move to the left, if on the guide's right arm, or to the right, if on the guide's left arm, until directly behind the guide.
- (3) Arm will thus be in a straight position and diagonal to the guide's arm.

## 6. Doorways

## (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Give cue, as in a narrow opening or congested area, by placing arm behind and across back.
- (2) Watch for blind person to come through the door, and when through, return arm to regular position.
- (3) If opening of the door is silent or confusing, indicate verbally to the blind person whether the door opens on the right or left, so he can respond accordingly.

## (b) Blind Person

- (1) Respond to cue by moving back and behind the guide, as in a narrow opening or congested area, keeping arm straight and diagonal.
- (2) If the door opens with door knobs, listen for the sound of the knobs or other clues.
  - a. If the door opens on the right and the blind person is on the guide's right arm, place right hand on the door and slide it along until inside the door, letting it close behind.
  - b. If the door opens on the left and the blind person is on the guide's right arm, change the gripping hand from left to right and place the now free left hand on the door, sliding the hand along the door until inside and letting the door close behind.
- (3) When on the guide's left arm, simply reverse the procedures.
- (4) When the opening of the door is silent or confusing, respond to the guide's verbal cue and apply same procedure, letting the door close behind.
- (5) When inside the door, follow the guide's cue and return to regular position.

## 7. Stairs

## (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Give cue for stairs by pausing before either ascending or descending stairs; or, ascend or descend first step and then pause.
- (2) When the blind person is ready, ascend or descend the stairs. Later, this movement is very fluid; that is, little pause is needed.

## (b) Blind Person

- (1) Follow cue of ascending or descending and search for the first step.
- (2) When ready, ascend or descend stairs.

## 8. Seating in an Auditorium

## (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) Give cue for a narrow opening or congested area by placing arm behind and across back.
- (2) Sidestep in once you are at your row of seats.
- (3) Guide the blind person to a seat and indicate by placing his hand on the back of the chair that he should be seated.

## (b) Blind Person

- (1) Follow cue of narrow opening or congested area by moving back and behind the guide.
- (2) After finding your row of seats, trail with your hand along the backs of the seats in front of you.
- (3) After the indication to be seated, determine by touch the position of the seat, sweeping it with the free hand, and then sit down.
- (4) If the blind person leaves first, trail as above, with your free arm extended slightly ahead so you will not run into others. Once you are at the aisle, stop and face the exit and wait for your sighted guide.
- (5) When without the help of a sighted guide, rise from the seat with the forearm protective technique in position and proceed in the above manner.

## 9. Familiarization

## (a) Sighted Guide

- (1) When acquainting a blind person with a building, the sighted guide, after first walking the hallways for general layout purposes, walks down each hallway with the blind person trailing at the same time, but following the sighted guide.

- (2) Point out clues and generalities that are present throughout the building.
  - (b) Blind Person
    - (1) Trail along wall as learned.
    - (2) Attend to clues and generalities.
- 10. Room Familiarization
  - (a) Indicate what features in a room are important for the blind person's comfort, such as location of windows, light switch, thermostat, outlets, etc.
  - (b) Always work from a stable point, such as the door.
  - (c) Warn of hazards, such as fragile figurines, cactus plants, overhangs, etc.
  - (d) Various methods of familiarizing include:
    - (1) around perimeter of room
    - (2) from door to object to door
    - (3) walking length and width to get estimate of size
    - (4) furniture layout
  - (e) Techniques used include:
    - (1) trailing
    - (2) squaring off
    - (3) direction taking
    - (4) upper body
    - (5) lower body
  - (f) Give aesthetic information, such as colors and details in the room.

## B. Trailing

### Technique:

1. The arm is extended out in front at the side.
2. The wrist is slightly bent downward with the palm facing inward towards the body.
3. The fingers are slightly curved inward with the knuckles lightly touching the wall for trailing purposes.
4. On some occasions, such as for rough surfaces, the palm faces outward. Thus, the fingers are curved outward and lightly touch the wall for trailing purposes.
5. Either arm and hand may be used, but the hand or arm nearest the wall is the one used.

Trailing is used when walking along a wall and may be used for familiarization of a building with a sighted guide; or, it may be used without a sighted guide in combination with the forearm protective techniques. It is learned for safety and also for purposes of reaching an objective or goal without the sighted guide and for picking up cues in reaching this goal.

## C. Forearm Protective Techniques

### 1. Upper Body

#### Technique:

- (a) The forearm and hand are extended out and in front of the upper body, with an obtuse angle (135 degrees) between forearm and upper arm. The wrist is not bent, but in line with the forearm, and the palm faces forward.
- (b) In relation to the opposite shoulder, the hand is approximately 2 inches beyond this shoulder, thus well protecting the opposite shoulder.
- (c) The palm of the hand faces away from the body with the fingers together and in line with the forearm. The fingers thus protrude the farthest in order to easily pick up obstacles in one's path.
- (d) Either arm and hand may be used.
- (e) The upper body skill may be used in combination with either trailing or the lower body skill.

This skill, mainly used indoors, is learned for navigation with (sometimes used with a "crummy" guide) or without the sighted guide, and is important because it enables the blind person to pick up obstacles of danger that would perhaps injure him if he came into full contact with them. Such obstacles would be doors jutting out, walls, poles, overhangs, etc.

### 2. Lower Body

#### Technique:

- (a) The arm and hand are extended out and diagonally in front of the lower body.
- (b) The wrist is slightly bent downward with the palm facing the person.
- (c) The fingers are together, pointing downward.
- (d) Either arm and hand may be used or both arms and hands may be used.
- (e) The lower body skill may be used either alone, using both arms, or in combination with the upper body skill.

This skill, mainly used indoors, is learned as a part of navigation without the sighted guide and is important for enabling the blind person to pick up obstacles, as in the upper body skill, that would possibly injure him if full contact with the object was encountered. Such obstacles found by this technique would be tables, chairs, desks, garbage cans, etc. However, this technique is only used in areas where one is fairly certain of the environment as one cannot find items below the lower hand.

#### D. Dropped Objects

##### Technique:

1. The blind person listens for the last sound of the object dropped--until the "sound is dead."
2. He then moves toward the area of the last sound heard and drops straight downward into a squatting position, keeping the upper body skill in position and placing his free hand on the floor.
3. With the arm in the upper body position, he checks for obstacles in the area. He then supports himself with one hand and begins searching for the dropped object with the other hand.
4. When searching for the dropped object, the hand moves in a systematic, circular motion, sweeping the area and widening the circle with each successive sweep.
5. When one hand has searched as much as it can reach, the other hand is used in the same manner--provided the object has not yet been found.
6. The area around the blind person, and also between his feet, is searched in this sweeping, circular manner until the dropped object is located.

#### E. Familiarization

This skill mainly involves a general acquainting of a blind person with some area or building. However, certain guidelines should be followed in a familiarization process.

1. The sighted guide first familiarizes the blind person with the wall or hall, after walking the halls first for general layout purposes, by using sighted guide technique and trailing.
2. Pointing out sensory clues, such as boiler room, restrooms, lobby, elevators, etc., is essential. Equally essential is the establishment of special spatial relationships, such as distances between certain doors and/or hallways or other objects.
3. Consistency is important. In the beginning, one should always begin at the same starting point when familiarizing a blind person with a building. Also, it is important to be consistent in the way one teaches and in the terms used.
4. An elementary beginning is important. One should go from generalities down to details gradually. Also, if one is working in a school situation, one should work on the necessities first, especially if time is of essence.
5. Familiarization should be sequential. For example, one should familiarize from the basement to the top and not haphazardly.
6. Also, always give the blind person some idea of what he will encounter if he "overshoots" an objective.

## F. Squaring Off

### 1. Object

- (a) The object is usually fixed and should be straight. It may be movable, but should be fairly stationary if it is.
- (b) The surface used can be in line with the path of travel or at right angles to the path of travel.
- (c) Objects used for squaring off would be tables, walls, chairs, desks, etc.

### 2. Position

- (a) The body should be straight, but not rigid--good posture.
- (b) The feet should be together and pointed straight ahead.
- (c) Foot alignment along the object may be either the back of the heels or the side of a foot.
- (d) If squaring off from a wall, the shoulders should be against the wall. If using a table or a chair for squaring off, contact with the object will be made with the buttocks or the legs.
- (e) The blind person should check to each side with his hands to make sure he is pointed straight ahead and not standing to one side or the other.

Squaring off is a skill in which a blind person positions himself along an object in preparation for walking in open space to some goal.

## G. Direction Taking

### Technique:

- 1. The blind person lines his shoulders, buttocks, legs, or feet against an object with his feet together and pointing in a straight line toward the goal.
- 2. Once positioned correctly, the blind person steps into the path.

Direction taking is a skill in which a straight line obtained from one object is used to get to another object or objective. It thus enables a blind person to reach a goal when walking in open space.

#### H. Re-orientation

When a blind person is lost and he is asked where he is, he may answer he does not know and may be rather upset. To help him re-orient himself, ask questions which eliminate where he cannot possibly be. Thus, with patient questioning and helpful direction, he can establish his position and move to where he should be. For after all, the whole key to this business is making the blind person become more independent and this is one of many ways of helping.

## DAILY LIVING SKILLS

Daily living skills encompass all those skills necessary for independent and effective daily living. These skills include a variety of techniques and activities from personal care to social graces. A partial listing of such skills is as follows:

clothing selection	mending
clothing care	inserting a key
shopping	washing hair
cleaning house	combing hair
making a bed	brushing teeth
polishing shoes	cleaning dentures
tying ties	shaving
eating techniques	applying make-up
money identification	smoking
dialing a telephone	posture

Though eating techniques is the only skill discussed in depth in this guide, information on the daily living skills listed and others not included may be found in the following manuals:

1. A Step-By-Step Guide to Personal Management for Blind Persons  
     American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.  
     15 West 16th Street  
     New York, NY 10011
2. An Introduction to Working with the Aging Person Who is Visually Handicapped  
     American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.  
     15 West 16th Street  
     New York, NY 10011
3. Caring for the Visually Impaired Older Person  
     The Minneapolis Society for the Blind, Inc.  
     1936 Lyndale Avenue South  
     Minneapolis, MN 55403

## EATING TECHNIQUES

The visually handicapped person locates his plate by reaching forward with both hands until he comes into contact with the table edge. With flexed fingers, he continues to move forward until he touches his plate.

The plate may serve as a reference point, helping him locate his silverware, napkin, glass, and so forth. To reach these items, he must "trail," which consists of keeping his flexed fingers in contact with the table as he slowly moves his hand forward and sideways.

Identify the food being served to the visually impaired individual. The position of the food on the plate and of any side dishes may be described in relation to the numbers on the face of a clock.

The best position for cutting meat is six o'clock. Mashed potatoes should be at ten o'clock and vegetables at two o'clock for a right-handed person so that the potatoes may serve as a pusher for the vegetables. The positions are reversed for a left-handed person.

Be sure the individual knows the location of the coffee, milk, water, sugar, cream, salt, pepper, butter, salad dressing, etc. These items should always be kept in the same place as much as possible.

The blind person can estimate the size of the portion of food being served by its weight on the fork or spoon. The size of a serving may also be determined by probing it with a knife. It is better to have too little a portion on the utensil, or even nothing, than to have an excess portion.

Salt may be differentiated from pepper by its heavier weight or its larger holes for pouring. Also, pepper has a distinctive aroma. In paper containers, salt and pepper may be distinguished by sound.

To determine how much salt or pepper is being placed on the food, the visually handicapped individual may place his hand over the food, palm down with fingers spread slightly apart. The seasonings may then be sprinkled over his fingers. An alternative method consists of pouring a small amount of salt or pepper into one hand and sprinkling it on the food with the other hand.

The individual should bend his trunk forward when eating so that any food which may be dropped will fall on his plate.

While eating, food should be pushed toward the center of the plate.

Bread, rolls, a knife, or a spoon may be used as a pusher to help pick up difficult foods. Food may also be pushed up against mashed potatoes or the sides of a dish.

To pour a liquid, the individual should first become familiar with the pouring container. Following this, he should hold the cup or glass near the top edge with the thumb and middle finger of one hand. The index finger should be bent at the first joint over the edge of the cup or glass to determine when it is full. The pouring container may rest on the edge of the cup or glass as the liquid is being poured.

If a blind person needs assistance in eating, such as in cutting meat, he will generally ask for it himself. Give the help required in as easy and unobtrusive a way as possible. Encourage and let the blind person do as much as he can for and by himself, giving help only when necessary.

## AIDS AND APPLIANCES

The two major sources for aids and appliances for the visually handicapped are as follows:

1. American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011
2. American Printing House for the Blind  
1839 Frankfort Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40206

Information concerning aids and appliances may be obtained from the AFB Catalog of Aids and Appliances and the APH General Catalog of Educational and Other Aids.

The following are a sample of the many aids and appliances available to blind persons:

- Alarm Clocks
- Braille Paper
- Braille Watches
- Clothing Color Tags
- Script Guides
- Self-threading Needles
- Signature Guides
- Slate and Stylus
- Raised Line Stationery
- Rulers

## ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

Although skills for a specific activity may need to be taught differently to a blind individual and occasionally modifications may be necessary, visually handicapped persons can take part in many of the same games and activities in which sighted persons participate. In addition, many games are specifically structured for blind persons, thus adding to their ease in participation with other blind persons and/or with sighted persons.

More time may be required by a blind person in learning a particular activity. Verbal instructions must be consistent, detailed, and specific. Instructions in a book may be recorded so that a sighted reader need not be present while the skill is being learned, such as for knitting instructions.

If the individual is partially sighted, make use of the residual vision. Utilize the individual's sense of touch, positioning the hands and fingers when necessary.

The choice of activities for a visually handicapped person should depend upon that person's likes and dislikes rather than upon a preconceived idea of what is appropriate for a blind person. Just as some sighted persons do not care for music, not all blind persons enjoy music.

Activities and games for a blind person should include some which he can do alone, some which involve one other person, and some which involve a group. Social activities should include sighted persons as well as other blind persons. However, some individuals may prefer the company of other blind persons. And at times, the competition may be more equalized in some activities if all the persons involved

are blind. The important fact to remember is that, with a little extra time and help, a blind individual can participate in most activities and games.

A partial list of games, many of which can be obtained from the American Foundation for the Blind, is as follows:

Bingo	Dominoes
Bowling	Monopoly
Checkers	Parcheesi
Chess	Pinochle Cards
Chinese Checkers	Playing Cards
Crossword Puzzle Set	Scrabble

Additional sources for activities and games, and also for aids and appliances, are as follows:

1. Howe Memorial Press  
Perkins School for the Blind  
Watertown, MA 02172
2. Tactile Aids for the Blind, Inc.  
2625 Forest Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50311
3. (a) Activities for the Aged and Infirm by Toni Merrill: 1967, 372 pp.  
(b) Recreation for Blind Adults by Maurice Case: 1966, 208 pp.  
Charles C. Thomas, Publisher  
301-327 East Lawrence Avenue  
Springfield, IL 62717

## LOW VISION AIDS

Consult an eye physician to assure proper and effective use and fit of an aid before purchasing a low vision aid.

Catalogs for low vision aids may be obtained from the following:

1. Low Vision Aids  
School of Optometry  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA 94720
2. Low Vision Services  
New York Association for the Blind  
111 East 59th Street  
New York, NY 10022
3. Reading Aids for the Handicapped  
American Library Association  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

A low vision aid kit is available in each Visual Services Division district office throughout the State of Montana for demonstration purposes. For information concerning a particular district office, contact:

Visual Services Division  
P. O. Box 1723  
Helena, MT 59601  
Phone: 406-449-3434

## READING MATERIALS

The Library of Congress provides free library service to those persons who are unable to read conventional printed materials or to hold a book -- the visually handicapped and the physically handicapped.

A wide range of fiction and non-fiction books are available in record discs (talking books), cassette tapes, magnetic tapes, braille, and large print. Many popular magazines are available in braille or record discs, too. Also available, in large print, are The Reader's Digest and The New York Times.

Talking book phonographs and cassette tape players are available on extended loan for as long as the reader needs the machine. All materials are mailed postage free.

For further information, concerning either reading matter or machines, contact your local public library or the state library, whose address is as follows:

Montana State Library  
930 East Lyndale Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601  
Phone: 1-800-332-3400

Books are also available on open reel tape from:

Recording for the Blind, Inc.  
215 East 58th Street  
New York, NY 10022

## RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

Religious literature may be obtained from the following sources:

THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY, 450 Park Avenue, New York,  
NY 10022

BRAILLE CIRCULATING LIBRARY, INC., 2823 West Grace Street,  
Richmond, VA 23221

THE CATHOLIC GUILD, 67 West Division Street, Chicago, IL  
60610

THE CHRISTIAN RECORD BRAILLE FOUNDATION, INC., 4444 South  
52nd Street, Lincoln, NB 68516

DIALOGUE PUBLICATIONS, INC., Berwyn, IL 60402

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER, 815 2nd Avenue, New York, NY  
10017

THE EPISCOPALIAN, Box 2122, Philadelphia, PA 19103

GUIDE POSTS TALKING BOOK, Carmel, NY 10512

THE JOHN MILTON SOCIETY, 475 Riverside Drive, New York,  
NY 10027

THE LUTHERAN BRAILLE EVANGELISM ASSOCIATION, 1619 Portland  
Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404

NEW MESSENGER TALKING BOOK, CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER  
DAY SAINTS, Society for the Aid of the Sightless, 47 East  
South Temple, Room 418A, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

PRESBYTERIAN LIFE, Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia,  
PA 19107

THE UPPER ROOM, Board of Missions, Methodist Church, 1908  
Grand Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205

THE XAVIER SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND, National Catholic Pub-  
lishing House, 154 East 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010

## TEN BASIC RULES FOR ASSISTING THE BLIND

1. Do not be misled. Before you decide your blind resident is "confused," be sure it isn't due only to lack of orientation.
2. Do not be misinformed. Eyes cannot be weakened or damaged by normal use. Tell your residents they don't have to "save" their remaining vision.
3. Do not be overprotective. The resident should do as much as he can by and for himself.
4. Conduct a thorough evaluation. The exact nature and precise extent of the resident's losses must be determined before realistic treatment goals can be established.
5. When you enter a blind person's room, identify yourself. When you are ready to leave, tell him you are leaving.
6. When you are guiding a blind person, let him take your arm and follow you. Do not push him ahead of you.
7. Always talk directly to a blind person, not through his companion. The blind can talk for themselves.
8. When you are in a blind person's room, leave his things where he has placed them. If you move them, he may not be able to find them by himself.
9. If you must leave a blind person alone for awhile, leave him near something he can touch to maintain contact with his environment.
10. When serving or eating with a blind person, tell him what he is being served. Explain the position of each portion by relating its position on the plate to the numbers on the face of a clock.

## SIX BASIC RULES FOR TEACHING THE BLIND

1. Allow enough time. Most activities take a blind person longer, at first.
2. Be organized. Have a definite system of storage, clear cut work procedures, and a consistent method of marking objects for identification.
3. Build a clear mental image (word picture) of the object with which you are working and the steps involved in the project.
4. Teach with supervised practice only. The blind person should not practice alone until he has mastered the project.
5. Use short, daily practice sessions. Fifteen to thirty minutes are best, repeated each day.
6. Be consistent in methods and terminology each time you explain or repeat a procedure.

## RESOURCES

A variety of pamphlets and publications concerning vision and vision problems is available on request from many agencies. A partial list of such available pamphlets, books, and publications has been compiled and included for your information. Though several of these may be purchased at a relatively nominal charge, many of them may be obtained free of charge. Because prices change frequently, they have not been included. However, information concerning cost, or other available publications not listed, can be obtained by writing the agency.

In addition, a bibliography of agencies concerned with the visually handicapped has been included for your use and information.

## PAMPHLETS--BOOKS--PUBLICATIONS

A Step-by-Step Guide to Personal Management for Blind Persons

An Introduction to Working with the Aging Person Who is

Visually Handicapped

Braille Alphabet and Numerals

Catalog of Aids and Appliances

Catalog of Publications

Diabetes and Blindness

Dog Guides for the Blind

Facts About Aging and Blindness

Facts About Blindness

Films About Blindness

Helen Keller

How Does a Blind Person Get Around?

I'm Blind, Let Me Help You--The Older Visually Handicapped

Volunteer

Living with Blindness

Louis Braille

Recreation and the Blind Adult

Understanding Braille

The American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011

Activities for the Aged and Infirm by Toni Merrill: 1967,  
372 pp.

Recreation for Blind Adults by Maurice Case: 1966, 208 pp.

Charles C. Thomas, Publisher  
301-327 East Lawrence Avenue  
Springfield, IL 62717

Blindness--Ability, not Disability #295A

Living with Blindness #473

What Can We Do About Limited Vision #491

Public Affairs Pamphlets  
381 Park Avenue South  
New York, NY 10016

Caring for the Visually Impaired Older Person

The Minneapolis Society for the Blind  
1936 Lyndale Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Facts About The Seeing Eye

If Blindness Occurs

The Seeing Eye, Inc.  
P. O. Box 375  
Morristown, NJ 07960

General Catalog of Educational and Other Aids

American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.  
1839 Frankfort Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40206

The Observer

Montana Association for the Blind, Inc.  
P. O. Box 536  
Kalispell, MT 59901

Reading is for Everyone

Library of Congress  
Division for the Blind and Physically  
Handicapped  
1291 Taylor Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20542

## AGENCIES

American Association of Ophthalmology  
1100 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036

American Association of Workers for the Blind  
1511 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005

American Council of the Blind, Inc.  
818 18th Street, N.W.  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20006

American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011

American Foundation for the Blind, Inc. -- Regional  
Office  
1860 Lincoln Street  
Denver, CO 80203

American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.  
1839 Frankfort Avenue  
Louisville, KY 40206

Braille Institute of America, Inc.  
741 North Vermont Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90029

"Eye Bank"  
The Eye Foundation of Billings, Montana  
P. O. Box 20224  
Billings, MT 59104

Howe Memorial Press  
Perkins School for the Blind  
175 North Beacon Street  
Watertown, MA 02172

Library of Congress  
Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped  
1291 Taylor Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20542

Lions International  
York and Cermak Roads  
Oak Brook, IL 60521

Low Vision Aids  
School of Optometry  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA 94720

Low Vision Services  
New York Association for the Blind  
111 East 59th Street  
New York, NY 10022

The Minneapolis Society for the Blind  
1936 Lyndale Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Montana Association for the Blind, Inc.  
P. O. Box 536  
Kalispell, MT 59901

Montana State Library  
Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped  
930 East Lyndale Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601

National Association for Visually Handicapped, Inc.  
3201 Balboa Street  
San Francisco, CA 94121

National Braille Association  
85 Godwin Avenue  
Midland Park, NJ 07432

National Federation of the Blind  
Randolph Hotel Building  
Des Moines, IA 50309

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.  
79 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Reading Aids for the Handicapped  
American Library Association  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

Recording for the Blind, Inc.  
215 East 58th Street  
New York, NY 10022

The Seeing Eye, Inc.  
P. O. Box 375  
Morristown, NJ 07960

Social and Rehabilitation Services  
Aging Services Bureau  
P. O. Box 1723  
Helena, MT 59601

Social and Rehabilitation Services  
Visual Services Division  
P. O. Box 1723  
Helena, MT 59601

Tactile Aids for the Blind, Inc.  
2625 Forest Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50311